



NEWS RELEASE

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STEPTOE ANNOUNCES THE AVAILABILITY OF OVER \$10 MILLION IN SECTION 533 HOUSING PRESERVATION GRANTS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2006

Morgantown, WV – March 24, 2006: Rural Development State Director Robert M. Steptoe, III, today announced the availability of over \$10 million nationwide in Section 533 Housing Preservation Grants for Fiscal Year 2006.

The Housing Preservation Grant program is a grant program which provides qualified public agencies, private nonprofit organizations, and other eligible entities grant funds to assist very low- and low-income homeowners in repairing and rehabilitating their homes in rural areas. In addition, this program assists rental property owners and cooperative housing complex owners in repairing and rehabilitating their units if they agree to make such units available to low- and very low-income persons. Please note that these grant funds will not be made to individual homeowners, but rather to eligible applicants as described above.

The deadline for submitting a grant application is May 19, 2006. No maximum or minimum grant level has been established at the National level. However, you can contact Penny Thaxton at 91 Boyles Lane, Parkersburg, WV 26104, (304) 422-9070, TTY/TDD (304) 284-4836 for state allocation information.

Further information on the Housing Preservation Grant (HPG) program and application requirements can be found in the Monday, March 20, 2006 Federal Register at <http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20061800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2006/06-2451.htm>, on USDA Rural Development's website at: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/> or by contacting the West Virginia Rural Development State Office at 75 High Street, Suite 320, Morgantown, WV 26505-7500, telephone (304) 284-4868, fax (304) 284-4893 or TTY/TDD (304) 284-4836.

Rural Development serves as the lead Federal entity for rural development needs and administers program assistance through its rural housing programs, rural business programs, and rural utilities programs. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.)

Further information on USDA Rural Development may be obtained by visiting USDA's web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>. In West Virginia, call 1-800-295-8228 to be put in touch with the appropriate personnel serving your county. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at 202.720.2600 (voice and TDD).

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